

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-20 COA-02 SWF-02 SPC-03 AID-20

EB-11 NSC-07 RSC-01 CIEP-02 TRSE-00 SS-20 STR-08

OMB-01 CEA-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00

XMB-07 OPIC-12 LAB-06 SIL-01 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15

DRC-01 /179 W

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R 191653Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5351

UNCLAS NASSAU 492

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDEV, EAGER, EFIS,

SUBJECT: GCOB MINISTER OUTLINES MARKETING CO-OPERATIVES  
FOR AGRICULTURE AND FISHING

1. MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES ANTHONY ROBERTS, IN HIS FIRST MAJOR STATEMENT SINCE RE-ASSUMING THAT POST IN JANUARY, HAS ANNOUNCED GOVERNMENT PLANS TO SET UP CO OPERATIVES IN THE AREAS OF FARMING AND FISHING. ROBERTS SAID THAT, THOUGH LEGISLATION NOW IN ITS FIFTH DRAFT, CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES THROUGHOUT THE BAHAMAS WILL BE ESTABLISHED UNDER A DIRECTOR OF CO OPERATIVES ANSWERABLE TO HIM.

2. ROBERTS IN THE COURSE OF REMARKS TO SHOP STEWARDS' CONVENTION IN NASSAU, ADMITTED THAT "UNTIL THIS PRESENT TIME, IT WOULD SEEM THAT CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHING TO PRODUCE HAS BEEN SADLY LACKING". HE OUTLINED THE MAJOR MARKETING PROBLEMS FACING BAHAMIAN FARMERS AND FISHERMEN, REVEALING THAT OF \$1.5 MILLION IN FOOD PRODUCTS PURCHASED LOCALLY BY THE GCOB DURING 1973, \$300,000 OWRTH WAS UNSUITABLE FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION BY THE TIME IT WAS RECEIVED. ROBERTS WENT ON TO SAY THAT GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE, WHICH HAD

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HERETOFORE BEEN NO MORE THAN "LIP SERVICE", WAS

NECESSARY TO ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUALS TO ENTER THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERY SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY. HE SAID THAT GOVERNMENT SPONSORED CO-OPERATIVES WERE A STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF GOVERNMENTAL SUPPORT TO ALLEVIATE MARKETING PROBLEMS. HE SAID THAT THE RECENT UN STUDY OF FISHERIES POTENTIAL IN THE BAHAMAS HAD BEEN ENCOURAGING ABOUT THE FEASIBILITY OF DEVELOPING THAT INDUSTRY, THAT THERE WAS NO REASON FOR 2/3 OF BAHAMIAN CRAW-FISH TO BE MARKETING IN FLORIDA AS AT PRESENT, AND THAT FURTHER ENCOURAGEMENT WOULD BE PROVIDED BY RESCINDING THE CURRENT BAN ON EXPORTING SCALE FISH.

3. "EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT COOPERATIVE GROUPS WILL NEED A LOT OF GUIDANCE," ROBERTS SAID, AND EXPLAINED THAT BUREAUCRATS UNDER HIS MINISTRY WOULD ADMINISTER THE VENTURES UNTIL THE CO OPERATIVES THEMSELVES COULD EMPLOY FULL TIME MANAGERS. THIS GOVERNMENT CONTROL WILL ENSURE THAT CO OPERATIVE FUNDS ARE HANDLED PROPERLY, ROBERTS SAID, BUT HE DENIED THAT THEY WOULD BE ADMINISTERED FOR POLITICAL ENDS.

4. ROBERTS PROMISED THAT GOVERNMENT SPONSORED LEGISLATION SETTING UP CO OPERATIVES WOULD BE INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY "IN A FEW WEEKS." EMBASSY WILL ENDEAVOR TO OBTAIN A COPY ASAP.

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## Message Attributes

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